

**Consensus of the California Strategic Growth Council on  
Federal Transportation Policy  
Providing Efficient Mobility for the 21st Century**

The nation's planning and investment in transportation must be oriented to support national goals of efficient mobility, economic competitiveness, energy security, healthy populace, environmental and natural resource protection. Sustainable economies and healthy communities are those with access to jobs, education, healthcare, adequate and affordable housing, parks and open space, and more. Providing equitable access to these crucial needs in a resource-constrained environment will require new ways of integrating policy, planning, and infrastructure funding.

California is establishing policies, programs, and institutions for continued growth and development that achieve environmental, equity, economic, and health benefits for rural and urban areas. The establishment of the Strategic Growth Council (SGC) in 2009 demonstrates California's commitment to multi-agency, multi-objective collaborative planning. California is also leading groundbreaking work on scenario-based regional planning that seeks the development of efficient land use patterns that result in a variety of co-benefits including improved public health by encouraging physical activity, adequate and affordable housing, equitable access to jobs, goods and services, habitat preservation, and efficient use of resources. California through the implementation of Senate Bill 375 (Steinberg, 2008) is creating targets and incentives for regions and developers to achieve greenhouse gas emissions reductions through improved regional land use and transportation planning and project implementation that achieves sustainability goals. These integrated planning approaches will provide for reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and reduced costs to consumers, business, and the local/regional entities that are collectively responsible for implementation.

The federal government is a critical partner in furthering California's sustainability goals. By planning strategically for how we fund transportation infrastructure, the Congress and the Administration have the opportunity to increase mobility of goods and people while improving public health, enhancing environmental performance, and reducing costs.

The SGC supports the California Consensus on Federal Transportation Authorization for 2009<sup>1</sup> that was developed and endorsed by the California Alliance for Leadership in Mobility. The California Consensus provides the foundation for a much-needed and robustly-funded national program required for management of the nation's transportation system. However it is clear that efficient mobility and sustainability require a broader perspective and integrated planning approach among all levels of government and stakeholders. A recommended framework for achieving these shared goals is provided below.

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.dot.ca.gov/fedliaison/documents/others/Consensus\\_2009\\_Principles.pdf](http://www.dot.ca.gov/fedliaison/documents/others/Consensus_2009_Principles.pdf)

**Recommended Framework**

The following elements should be included in any comprehensive federal transportation program to promote sustainability, provide safe efficient mobility, and ensure proper coordination among federal, state, and local agencies.

**Establishing Regional Plans and Priorities:**

- Encourage and incentivize Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO's), in coordination with local governments and other regional stakeholders, to establish scenario-based regional land use and transportation planning processes that:
  - consider the demographic and economic assumptions established for regional housing needs projections, regional transportation plans (RTP), current local general plans, and any relevant greenhouse gas emission reduction targets under state and federal law;
  - inform RTP development by identifying strategies and transportation projects that achieve efficient mobility and connectivity while demonstrating other benefits, including efficient use of resources, greenhouse gas emission reduction, air quality improvement, housing choices, and environmental protection;
  - consider the potential terrestrial, hydrological, coastal, and air quality impacts of climate change and climate change adaptation strategies for existing and planned projects.
- Integrate public health and natural resource benefits into transportation planning and performance measures at the regional, state, and national levels. Involve public health and conservation officials and experts to participate in regional planning and priority setting.

**Resources for Planning:**

- Provide technical and financial assistance to States, MPOs, Regional Transportation Planning Agencies (RTPAs), and local governments to develop, enhance, and communicate scenario-based modeling and analytical techniques that advance best practices.
- Provide technical and financial assistance to local governments for the development or updates of general and specific plans, zoning codes, and local transportation plans that facilitate the implementation of the scenario-based regional plans.

**Enabling Policies and Funding:**

- Federal funding should incentivize states, MPOs, and local governments to prioritize projects that facilitate scenario-based regional plans which:
  - promote sustainable development patterns such as mixed-use, compact, and transit oriented development;
  - provide an appropriate range of opportunities for housing and economic development
  - provide balanced and flexible funding for enhanced and expanded pedestrian, bicycle, and transit infrastructure networks including implementation of "complete streets" and transportation policies that reduce the reliance on single occupancy automobile travel, and
  - protect natural resources, open space, agricultural lands, and promote urban greening.
- Provide federal incentives to encourage state, local, and regional governments to implement complementary policies that foster efficient mobility. For example - policies that generate needed funds and reduce congestion such as cordon pricing, toll roads, and parking strategies, which can be used to support active transportation modes including transit, biking, and walking.
- Policies and programs, aligned with the above criteria, should target the highest proportion of sustainable benefits for economically and socially disadvantaged communities. If negative impacts cannot be eliminated then mechanisms to mitigate those impacts for these groups must be prioritized.